

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 COME-00 ACDA-07 DHA-02 ORM-02 SCA-01
EB-08 TRSE-00 OMB-01 STR-04 CU-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01
PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 /077 W
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FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4435
INFO USIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 3192

E. O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, CI, SHUM
SUBJECT: CHILEAN REACTIONS TO PRESIDENT'S OAS SPEECH

REF: STATE 84912

1. SUMMARY: GOC AND MEDIA REACT IN LOW KEY TO PRESIDENT'S OAS ADDRESS. ONLY ONE POINT -- CALL FOR GREATER ASSISTANCE TO REFUGEES -- STRIKES SOME FIRE. CHILEAN FONOFF DIRGEN FEARS THIS COULD LEAD TO INCREASE IN ORGANIZED ACTION AGAINST CHILE BY EXILE. AMBASSADOR STRESSES HUMANITARIAN PURPOSE OF PRESIDENT'S PROPOSALS. END SUMMARY.

2. DESPITE ITS IMPORTANCE FOR THE LONG TERM, CHILEAN GOVERNMENT AND MEDIA GAVE RELATIVELY LITTLE CONSIDERATION TO PRESIDENT CARTER'S OAS SPEECH. THERE WAS NO OFFICIAL COMMENT FROM THE FOREIGN OFFICE. AUTHORITATIVE EL MERCURIO DID NOT EDITORIALIZE AT ALL. CHILE'S LARGEST CIRCULATION NEWSPAPER LA TERCERA RATHER TEPIDLY PRAISED THE SPEECH FOR ITS REALISM, ITS RECOGNITION OF DIVERSITY WITHIN THE HEMISPHERE, ITS EMPHASIS ON NON-INTERVENTION (WITH A GLANCING CRITICISM OF U.S. POLICY), AND ITS VIEWS ON TRADE AND COMMODITIES. AS TO HUMAN RIGHTS, EDITORIALIST MAINTAINED THAT AUTHORITARIAN MILITARY GOVERNMENTS IN SOUTH AMERICA ARE WORKING FOR THEIR DEFENSE, CONFIDENTIAL

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AS AGAINST MARXIST TOTALITARIANISM.

3. GOVERNMENT NEWSPAPER EL CRONISTA TOOK A GENERALLY SIMILAR LINE, WITH EVEN STRONGER EMPHASIS ON WHAT IT TERMED CHILE'S ROLE IN PROPOSING, IN INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES, CONCRETE INITIATIVES TO PROTECT HUMAN RIGHTS -- WHEREAS CUBA AND OTHER SOVIET SATELLITES HAVE DISTORTED THESE OBJECTIVES FOR POLITICAL PURPOSES.

4. AS USIS HAS REPORTED, GOC TELEVISION OMITTED FROM PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS ONLY THE TWO SENTENCES DEALING WITH PROGRAMS FOR AIDING POLITICAL REFUGEES. IN CONVERSATION WITH FOREIGN OFFICE DIRECTOR GENERAL JAIME LAVIN APRIL 18, AMBASSADOR ASCERTAINED THAT THIS WAS A CONSIDERED DECISION. LAVIN PRAISED THE SPEECH IN GENERAL, NOTING THAT IT CONTAINED MANY POINTS WITH WHICH CHILE WAS IN AGREEMENT. HE WAS TROUBLED, HOWEVER, BY WHAT HE DESCRIBED AS THE POSSIBLY HARMFUL RESULTS OF A MORE ACTIVE POLICY FOR RESETTLING AND HELPING POLITICAL REFUGEES. THIS SEEMED TO HIM AN INDICATION THAT THE UNITED STATES, AND THEREFORE PROBABLY OTHER GOVERNMENTS, WOULD NOT ONLY RECEIVE MUCH LARGE NUMBERS OF DISSIDENTS, BUT WOULD ALLOW THEM MORE SCOPE FOR THE ANTI-GOC INTRIGUE IN WHICH THEY ENGAGED WHILE ABROAD. LAVIN RAISED THE QUESTION OF HOW MUCH FREEDOM SUCH POLITICAL REFUGEES SHOULD HAVE, WHILE IN OTHER COUNTRIES, TO ORGANIZE PLOTS AND ACTIVITIES DIRECTED AGAINST THEIR HOMELANDS. COMMENT: FOREIGN MINISTER CARVAJAL HAS PREVIOUSLY MADE SAME POINT TO AMBASSADOR.

5. AMBASSADOR SAID LAVIN HAD HIS EYE ON THE WRONG BALL. COUNTRIES OF RECEPTION OF REFUGEES HAD THEIR OWN LEGAL PROVISIONS COVERING THE ACTIVITIES OF ANY PERSONS WITHIN THEIR JURISDICTION. THE IMPORTANT POINT WAS HUMANITARIAN. THE PRESIDENT AND MOST OTHER AMERICANS BELIEVED THAT VICTIMS OF POLITICAL OPPRESSION SHOULD HAVE MORE HELP IN ESTABLISHING AND MAINTAINING THEMSELVES WHERE THEY WOULD LEAD A NORMAL LIFE.
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